

Docket Item #9
Planning Commission Public Hearing
November 6, 2025

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of September 4, 2025.

*** * * M I N U T E S * * ***

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION

September 4, 2025 7:00 P.M.

Council Chamber

301 King Street, City Hall Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Melissa McMahon, Chair

Stephen Koenig, Vice

Chair David Brown

Robert Dubé

Holly Lennihan

Jody Manor

Members Absent: Vivian Ramirez (excused)

Staff Present:

Karl Moritz

Department of Planning & Zoning

Paul Stoddard

Department of Planning & Zoning

Nancy Williams

Department of Planning & Zoning

Kendra Jacobs

Department of Planning & Zoning

Ashley Casimir

Department of Planning & Zoning

Lanning Blaser

Department of Planning & Zoning

Christina Zechman Brown

Office of the City Attorney

David Sharon

Department of Planning & Zoning

Brian Dofflemeyer

Department of Planning & Zoning

Dirk Geratz

Department of Planning & Zoning

Abigail Harwell

Department of Planning & Zoning

Rob Kerns

Department of Planning & Zoning

Gavin Pellitteri

Transportation and Environmental Services

#1. CALL TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Ramirez was excused. All other members were present.

Chair McMahon read the following instructions:

“If you wish to speak on a Docket Item and have not already signed up to do so, please fill out a Speaker Form online by following the “Sign Up to Speak” hyperlink present on the cover page of this evening’s Public Hearing Docket or in person by filling out a hardcopy speaker form, which can be found on either materials tables (located immediately outside the Chambers or at the back of the Chambers), and providing it to Ms. Jacobs, who has her hand raised.

Please note, comments from the public are limited to 3 minutes per speaker, with the exception of applicants and their representation. To make your public comment through the Zoom application, please click on the "Raise Hand" button located on the Zoom taskbar once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, in order to let staff know it is you who needs to be unmuted in order to make your public comment.

To make your public comment if you are dialing into tonight’s meeting via phone, please press *9 to execute the “Raise Hand” function once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, followed by *6 to toggle the unmute function. To make your public comment in person, please come up to either podium located at the front of the Chambers when you hear your name called upon to make your statement. Before starting your public comment, please first identify yourself by first and last name.

The City encourages and welcomes public comments from all residents on Planning Commission matters. In keeping with that principle, and with the principle of inclusiveness, this is a reminder of the shared expectation that the content and tenor of public comments always be civil and respectful. Thank you for honoring those principles. A reminder to all, including Commissioners, staff, and speakers in the Chambers to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner.”

Chair McMahon asked if there were any changes to the Docket. Ms. Jacobs announced that there no changes to the docket.

Items #4 and #5 were removed from the Consent Calendar.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- #2** Subdivision #2025-00003
15 & 17 E Custis Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision to re-subdivide three existing lots into two lots; zoned R-2-5/Residential.
Applicant: 15 & 17 E Custis Ave LLC represented by M. Catharine Puskar, attorney

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve Subdivision #2025-00003 on the Consent Calendar.

- #3** Subdivision #2025-00004
1702 Dewitt Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision to re-subdivide an existing lot into two lots; zoned R-2-5/Residential.
Applicant: Alex Wilson

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve Subdivision #2025-00003 on the Consent Calendar.

This item was removed from the Consent Calendar

- #4** Rezoning #2025-00003
3333 Helen Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for an amendment to the official Zoning Map to change the zone from R-2-5/Residential family zone to RB/Townhouse zone; zoned R-2-5/Residential.
Applicant: Morgan Tyler and Tomas Plaza Reneses

SPEAKERS

There were no speakers.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Brown inquired about the existing dwelling's deficient side yard. Staff explained that it had received City approval and was not an illegal structure.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Rezoning #2025-00003. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

This item was removed from the Consent Calendar

- #5** Development Special Use Permit #2025-10008
3000 Business Center Drive - DASH Bus Facility
Public hearing and consideration of a request for a Development Special Use Permit with a Site Plan to expand the parking, maintenance, and storage at the DASH bus facility by constructing a canopy with Electric Vehicle charging stations; zoned I/Industrial.
Applicant: Alexandria Transit Company (DASH)

SPEAKERS

There were no speakers.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Dubè commented that the technology being implemented with this project is ahead of the building code standards and asked staff to consider upgrades to safety and protection protocols. He is also hopeful that there will be progress toward flood mitigation which is proposed to be handled by the fourth rail project.

Chair McMahon expressed appreciation for this project and acknowledged the City's measurable progress toward making transportation services more sustainable.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Dubè, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2025-10008. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

New Business

- #6** Special Use Permit #2025-00032
51 E Windsor Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to construct a two-unit semi-detached dwelling on a developed substandard lot; zoned R-2-5/Residential.
Applicant: 51 E Windsor, LLC; represented by Deyi Awadallah

SPEAKERS

Deyi Awadallah, applicant, answered questions from the Commission.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Brown stated that, while only lot 333 was the subject of the SUP application, the City Council has relatively broad authority to consider land use matters when reviewing SUPs. Commissioner Brown asked the applicant to clarify how the project would be phased, how site grading would be handled, and if the applicant was willing to try to preserve a tree on lot 332. The applicant confirmed that both lots would be developed at the same time, that grading matters would be determined by his engineering team and City requirements during the grading plan review, and that he was willing to make efforts to preserve the tree on lot 333.

Chair McMahon explained the basics of substandard lot SUP reviews and spoke in support of the request.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2025-00032, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

#7 Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00007

(A) Initiation of a Text Amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of an amendment to update Article XIII of the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate assessments and adaptations required to address coastal resilience and adaptation to sea-level rise and climate change to align with updates to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act as set out in 9VAC25-830-155.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

SPEAKERS

There were no speakers.

DISCUSSION

Vice Chair Koenig highlighted that the proposed revision to the requirements only applies to focused and relatively small resources protection areas that are most vulnerable to impacts. He stated that the resilience and adaptation measures will eventually be applicable to other areas of the City, so implementation in the most impacted areas now is helpful. Vice Chair Koenig asked Staff to discuss what falls into the category of acceptable adaptation measures. T&ES Principal Planner Gavin Pellitteri stated that measures such as living shorelines, bioretention, and rain gardens are thought to be good environmental site design practices.

Commissioner Dubé agreed with some of Vice Chair Koenig's comments. He also mentioned that the NOAA map website shared by Mr. Pellitteri was helpful in understanding the impacts of flooding in different areas of the City.

Chair McMahon asked about applying this assessment approach to a proposed project site or building that would otherwise use a different approach. Mr. Pellitteri discussed Windmill Hill and RTN as examples of projects that would be assessed using a nature-based solution based on existing and proposed site conditions.

Commissioner Manor asked if Windmill Hill would be considered a success. Mr. Pellitteri responded that Windmill Hill would be considered an overwhelming success and cited some examples.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission

voted to initiate and recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00007. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

#8 Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00005

(A) Initiation of a Text Amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of an amendment to update Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance to add provisions for a mural program.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Planning and Zoning Department

SPEAKERS

There were no speakers.

DISCUSSION

Chair McMahon asked whether the regulation of text size was related to the concept that sign ordinances must be content neutral. Staff confirmed that this was correct. Chair McMahon also asked how the proposal compared to the provisions in the old sign ordinance. Staff explained that the past ordinance needed improvement and that case law showed that having separate mural provisions would be the safest legal route to provide flexibility for murals.

Vice Chair Koenig stated that he was supportive of the approach to distinguish murals from signs to encourage murals. He also highlighted the legacy clause which will ensure that current murals may continue to exist.

Commissioner Brown stated he thought the language was well researched and an excellent start to provide flexibility for murals. He acknowledged some potential implementation challenges as there could be some subjectivity in determining what would be an illustration versus what would be text.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to initiate Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00005. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00005. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

MINUTES

#9 Consideration of the minutes from the June 4 and 23, 2025 Planning Commission meetings.

On a motion by Commissioner Dubè, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2025 Public Hearing as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission deferred consideration of the June 23, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes to the October meeting. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioners' Reports, Comments & Questions

FY2025 Annual Report

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to approve the FY2025 Annual Report.

Commissioner Brown and Vice Chair Koenig provided a presentation on the history of the Potomac Yard area and the Small Area Plans. Commissioner Brown also discussed the possible museum that he and Vice Chair Koenig are recommending to City and community leadership groups. Commissioners discussed the history and progression of the Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens Small Area Plan in the last 80 years.

Chair McMahon highlighted the investments made in multi-modal transportation options and the progress in making the area a place that people want to be, and that the journey continues for what may be next. She thanked Commissioner Brown and Vice Chair Koenig for their work to stay engaged in the future. Chair McMahon suggested that the Planning Commission hold a work session to discuss the upcoming proposals and the Commission's role in the long term planning of the Potomac Yards area.

Commissioner Lennihan commented on the impacts of COVID on the future development of the area. She also stated that there needs to be some consideration and education on the best practices and the types of uses that make sense for the current market.

Vice Chair Koenig discussed the evolution of the proposed density and uses for individual blocks over the years due to changing market conditions and other factors.

Commissioner Dubé provided an update on the ARHA Redevelopment Working Group. He reported on the progress of the Samuel Madden, Ladrey, Andrew Atkins, and Cameron Valley sites.

Commissioner Manor discussed the opposition to the proposed pump house at Waterfront Park. He also discussed the potential impacts to buildings in the immediate area, including the Boat House.

Planning & Zoning Director's Report

Interim Director Paul Stoddard summarized the Director's Report. Commissioners provided feedback on the One Start initiative, the Docket Look Ahead and Community Update meetings.

#10 ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:24 pm.